



## **Proposal for American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Proposal**

### **Program Objective**

The objective of ALEC's Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) program is to educate our policy makers about the issues surrounding the use of UAVs for domestic purposes. We will inform our state legislator members about considered uses for UAVs in law enforcement, border control, firefighting, search and rescue operations and myriad other uses. We will explore the privacy issues involved and would like to present our members a balanced overview of the topic that addresses some of the misconceptions about UAV capabilities and the benefits of UAV use in the domestic sphere.

### **Situational Overview**

State legislatures are rapidly enacting legislation on domestic UAV use without a complete understanding of the issues involved. As of this writing, 35 states had considered or were considering legislation, including Virginia which passed legislation restricting the use of UAVs, including a two-year moratorium on using UAVs except in university research and search and rescue missions.

State legislators are concerned that UAV surveillance could threaten the civil liberties, especially the privacy of their constituents, so the trend in the legislatures is to err on the side of highly restrictive regulations. Unfortunately, these restrictions might ultimately prevent civilian institutions from taking advantage of UAVs as a cost-effective tool to perform their duties more efficiently during a time of shrinking state budgets. In many cases, ALEC legislators are spearheading these restrictive policies, often due to an incomplete understanding of the issues involved and UAV capabilities.

If misconceptions are not corrected in the immediate future, misguided policy will continue to proliferate throughout state legislatures, and this policy is likely to inform future *national* policy on the domestic use of UAVs. As appropriate UAV implementation could help states meet their public safety objectives in a fiscally responsible way, we would like to see the issues surrounding their use explored in a complete and objective manner.

### **Program Description**

A two-pronged approach would be the most effective way to deal with the issue.

#### **ALEC International Relations Task Force (IRTF) Membership**

Model policy on the domestic use of UAVs falls under the jurisdiction of ALEC's International Relations Task Force/National Security Subcommittee, and we anticipate that the task force will consider such policy in the very near future. Issues that capture our members' attention the way this one has are generally brought to ALEC. ALEC task force membership would afford the member

the opportunity to participate in the discussions on the model policy and to inform and enrich the debate. The IRTF is relatively small (well over 100 legislators and 6 private sector members) and has the flexibility to consider and vote on model policy for domestic UAV use rapidly. If this policy is passed within the task force and approved by ALEC's Legislative Board of Directors, it becomes official ALEC model policy and can be accessed by all of our state legislators. Other issues that the task force has explored and continues to discuss include Sequestration, Civilian/Commercial Applications for NASA Research, Sustainable Energy Best Practices in the Military and Overseas, H1B visa expansion, Earth Observation, Expanding the Commercial Marketplace for Space Launches, etc.

The issue of our bimonthly magazine *Inside ALEC* that will be distributed at our Annual Meeting in August 2013 in Chicago will focus on International and Energy issues. An article on domestic uses for UAVs would be a welcome addition to the magazine and would automatically be distributed to those in attendance at the meeting – roughly 1,000 state legislators as well as 1,000 policy and business leaders from across the country. Such distribution would give the issue a deserved spotlight. An article in ALEC's blog, *The American Legislator*, could appear before the Annual Meeting.

#### **UAV Educational Sponsorship Opportunity at ALEC Spring Task Force Summit**

ALEC's Communications and Technology Task Force will host a panel discussion/lunch to explore the domestic uses of UAVs at ALEC's Spring Task Force Summit on May 3 in Oklahoma City, OK. We expect 30-40 state legislators to attend. Two speakers who favor more restrictions on the use of UAVs have already been confirmed – Jim Harper a noted privacy expert from the Cato Institute and Ryan Kiesel a noted privacy advocate from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). Both will thoroughly cover the privacy challenges UAV technology poses. This will be our members' first exposure to this issue at an ALEC event, and ALEC wants to ensure that we approach the issue in a balanced fashion. We will have presenters who will emphasize some of the benefits of the domestic uses of UAVs, and the sponsor would be able to select two presenters that would offer this point of view. We would also ask the additional panelists to address the general aviation challenges facing domestic UAVs. We would provide travel expenses for four additional ALEC public sector members from the International Relations Task Force to attend and/or moderate the panel from select states currently considering UAV policy.

#### **Annual Meeting Workshop Sponsorship**

This year's Annual Meeting will take place in Chicago, IL August 7-10, 2013 where we expect roughly 2,000 state legislators, policy experts and business leaders to be in attendance. Workshops are panel discussions open to all attendees at our Annual Meeting, and we are confident that a panel discussion on the domestic uses of UAVs would be exceedingly popular. We also have workshop sponsorships at our States and Nation Policy Summit in early December 2013 which generally has attendance of 700-800 state legislators, policy experts and business leaders.

#### **Additional Thoughts**

This is a timely issue where our members need a better understanding to make informed decisions. However, this topic is also an excellent opportunity to introduce the concept of civilian applications for products that were originally intended for military and/or space applications and to highlight the critical role that public private partnerships in research play in innovation and economic growth.